'Like an abstract painting drawn from a heightened realism; shape, form, colour'… *and music*: abstraction, meaning and nostalgia in 1960s Scottish industrial documentary.

Introduction*

In a script John Grierson wrote and recited for links for the compilation documentary *I Remember, I Remember* in 1968[1], a celebratory retrospective of documentary films he had been involved with since 1929, he stated that 'most people—when they think of documentary film they think of public reports, and social problems and worthwhile education and all that sort of thing. For me it's something more magical'.[2] He said this by way of introduction to a clip from *The Big Mill*,[3] a film about steel making in Motherwell made in 1963 in association with Films of Scotland Committee, of which Grierson was a member. Grierson (1899-1972), a Scotsman from Stirling, was well positioned to make such a comment having had a profound role in the inception and development of documentary film. He was the first to use the term documentary in the modern sense in 1926[4] and led the vanguard pre-war British documentary 'Movement'[5] for ten years from the late 1920s, though he only directed one film himself, *Drifters* in 1929. He was a controversial but key inspirational figure as producer, teacher, theorist, administrator and fund-raiser for film units at the Empire Marketing Board and then at the General Post Office. He oversaw the making of films like *Song of Ceylon*[6] and the famous *Night Mail*[7] scored by Walter Leigh and Benjamin Britten respectively. In general, though the pre-war Movement saw a primary role for documentary as educative, it differed from the more current critical and issue-based concerns of documentary that grew with the rise of television from the 1960s and that Grierson alludes to above. Rather, it saw its role in terms of public duty in either describing everyday life (and especially of the working classes) as a counter to Hollywood's out-of-touch 'dream factory', or as more overt government propaganda or promotion of industry. To these ends, aesthetic concerns played a much greater functionally interpretive role than today in terms of both photography and the use of sound and especially music in order to create something 'more magical' and intuitively communicative.

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* Alongside secondary literary sources, the article makes extensive use of previously under-explored primary archival source materials from:

- Moving Image Archive of the National Library of Scotland (NLS) at Kelvin Hall, Glasgow;
- John Grierson and Forsyth Hardy archives at the University of Stirling (JGA and FHA respectively);
- The archives of composers Frank Speeding and Iain Hamilton at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), Glasgow and New York Public Library (NYPL).

Musical scores, film treatments and personal and business correspondence from the archives proved especially valuable. I also conducted interviews with Professor Rory Boyle of RCS, and filmmakers Murray Grigor and Edward McConnell and am grateful for their inside knowledge and personal reflections. I would also like to thank Lisa Colton and especially Robert Adlington for invaluable suggestions on various versions of this article.

[1] *I Remember, I Remember* (James Sutherland, 1968). Clips of the film can be retrieved from: https://scotlandonscreen.org.uk/resources/lesson-guides/grierson-and-the-documentary-movement. The full film is available on request from Moving Image Archive of the National Library of Scotland.

[2] John Grierson, *I Remember, I Remember* (1968), 1-6 at 5 (JGA 4/11/476).

[3] *The Big Mill* (Laurence Henson, 1963). Full film can be retrieved from: http://movingimage.nls.uk/film/0387 and is also available on Panamint Cinema DVD, PDC2047.

[4] Forsyth Hardy, John Grierson: a Documentary Biography (London, 1979), 42.

[5] The capitalized 'Movement' always refers to the pre-war British documentary Movement of Grierson and others.

[6] *Song of Ceylon* (Basil Wright, 1934).

[7] *Night Mail* (Harry Watt, 1936).

Elizabeth Sussex has described the post-war 'Fall' of the Movement as occurring between the late 1940s and the closure of the wartime successor to the GPO Unit, the Crown Film Unit in 1952,[8] a line followed by others in canonizing its pre-war incarnation.[9] However, an examination of the vast archive of theatrical films in the decades that followed, including the films that form the focus of this article, belies this idea. British documentary after the war retained significant elements of the Movement's ethos and aesthetics[10] leading to a very long and productive 'tail' that lasted until the 1970s rather than late 1940s. The Films of Scotland Committee (part of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry and under whose auspices all the films under discussion were made), followed in the tradition of the Movement and was part of this post-war 'tail'. It was distinctive however in that it was set up to 'promote, stimulate and encourage the production and circulation of Scottish films of national interest' especially about industry and internationally. It made 155 films between 1954-82 to that end.[11] Grierson was a founding member and key production adviser,[12] remaining so until his death in 1972. He encouraged it to go even further than in his Movement days in exploring aesthetic strategies in order to enhance this paramount promotional aspect. Since the Committee received no government grant for filmmaking, sponsorship was vital for a Scottish documentary film industry to be established thus *The Big Mill* and the two other films to be examined in this article, *Seawards the Great Ships* (1960)[13] and *The Heart of Scotland* (1962),[14] (briefly described in Figure 1), are all documentaries financially sponsored by those whose concerns are the topics of the films. They essentially, promote their sponsors' wishes—to sell strip steel, promote shipbuilding on the Clyde, and the history and industries of Stirlingshire respectively, as well as serving the higher function of promoting Scotland to the world. In their original form they use colourful and arresting visual display of industrial processes and the people controlling those processes, commissioned symphonic music, and educative and poetic voice-over commentaries with literary pretensions. In general, they lack a critical or objective approach; they contain no interviews, voices of the workers or management and are unconcerned with specific social matters or the problems of the industrial workplace. However, the skillful and innovative combinations of sound and image, the focus on aesthetics and especially the use of music, nevertheless make the films rewarding to listen to and watch.

Crucially, these aesthetic aspects were brought to much greater prominence when Grierson re-edited the films for the selected clips shown in *I Remember*, and also in another closely related compilation documentary, *Hitchcock on Grierson* (1969).[15] In the re-editing process, he removed all the commentaries, considerably condensed the films and chose clips that already focussed on the aesthetic. This process allowed much greater emphasis to be placed on the interplay between image and music. In documentary terms, he pushes the

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[8] Elizabeth Sussex, *The Rise and Fall of British Documentary* (Berkeley, 1975), 172.

[9] Patrick Russell and James P. Taylor, 'The Long Tail', in Patrick Russell and James P. Taylor (eds.), *Shadows of Progress* (Basingstoke, 2010), 4-10 at 8.

[10] Ibid. 5.

[11] Films of Scotland Committee, 'Industrial Film' (1 Nov. 1955), n.p. (FHA H.2.2.2). The films were made by twenty-seven different companies in association with the Committee (N.a., 'Films of Scotland: the Work of the Films of Scotland Committee' ((*Faces of Scotland* blu-ray booklet, 2010)), 2-23 at 16-23).

[12] Hardy, *John Grierson*, 88-9.

[13] *Seawards the Great Ships* (Hilary Harris, 1960). Full film can be retrieved from: http://movingimage.nls.uk/film/2230 and is also available on Panamint Cinema DVD, PDC2050.

[14] *The Heart of Scotland* (Laurence Henson, 1962). Retrieved from: http://movingimage.nls.uk/film/0912

[15] *Hitchcock on Grierson* (Douglas Moodie, 1969). Retrieved from: https://the.hitchcock.zone/wiki/Hitchcock_on_Grierson_(STV,_1969). Though in black and white only, the audio and visual quality of *Hitchcock on Grierson* is much better than the surviving version of *I Remember*.

genre to its limits, the material approaching the realm of visual and musical high art rather than representational authenticity. The compilation versions of the films therefore represent a further aestheticization of a genre that was already focussed on pleasing the senses, a process that unshackles the films from the compromises made to meet the demands of their sponsors. I will argue that for Grierson, the higher purpose of inspiring the viewer on a 'magical' level underlies his approach, enacted by the creative skill of the filmmakers and composers he encouraged and by the re-edits Grierson subsequently conducted. The 'rewarding' experience of viewing the films enables this higher purpose to be *felt* and places the *ultimate* purpose of documentary beyond the cognitively driven and issue-based focus of his and the original films' critics.

Thus with a focus on Grierson's re-edits for *I Remember* and *Hitchcock on Grierson*, this article will show how his idea of 'magical' representation in documentary film is embedded in the original form of the films under discussion but that through the power of *music*, reaches its incantatory apotheosis in the re-edits. For Grierson, the emphasis on the *visual* abstraction of 'shapes' is at the heart of this magic since 'the word abstract … just means order, just means pattern'; it can 'convey a sense of beauty and a sense of beauty about the ordinary world. You could say that all things are beautiful if you can only get them in the right order'.[16] However, when it comes to the *meaning* conveyed by such an abstract visual approach to filmmaking, the emotive power of sound, and especially music, something rarely discussed by Grierson, is paramount. So the purpose here is to show how Grierson's removal of the commentaries for *I Remember* and the subsequent re-configuration of the audio-visual relationships, liberates the music from its bondage to semantically driven narratives, allowing it to re-enforce and even engender those meanings. This will be achieved by a detailed historical and comparative critical audio-visual analysis of the films in their original and compilation versions. In terms of the origins of those meanings within the broader context in which the original films were made and subsequent re-edits conducted, the article will show how they were engendered and underpinned by a political and philosophical world-view coming from Grierson himself and also from the social democratic consensus of the times. This politically progressive consensus informed Grierson and the filmmakers but also underpinned the aims of Films of Scotland and the sponsors of who funded the films. The discussion will conclude by suggesting that the power of the 'feel-good' nostalgia felt when viewing the compilation films today, as one contemplates this apparently more hopeful and politically progressive era, is still being generated by Grierson's 'magic', and ultimately fuelled by music.

Fig. 1 Details of the films under discussion.

I The Social Democratic Consensus and Post-War Documentary Film

The broad context within which the films in question must be placed is the post-Second World War social democratic consensus in Great Britain. The 'consensus' refers to the implicit agreement between Labour and Conservative political parties that the fundamental reforms and policies of the 1945 Labour government should be maintained, despite traditional differences in the ideologies of the two parties. The context and detail of the consensus is beyond the scope of this article but with the inception of the welfare state and introduction of institutions like the National Health Service, it represented a move to the political left that chimed with many in British documentary. Broadly speaking, British documentary film of the late 1940s to the late 1960s was part of this consensus and so underpinned the outlook of the filmmakers, composers and sponsors of the films under discussion. It also informed Grierson's general philosophical outlook and chimed with his

[16] Grierson, *I Remember,* 5.

understanding of the purpose of documentary as a means of national inspiration. It thus was important as a backdrop to both the original version of the films *and* their subsequent re-edits by Grierson. Like their pre-war predecessors, filmmakers saw the role of the documentary as an '*applied art*, whose big political idea was less to critique society from without than to aid its humane and effective functioning by illuminating the interconnections on which it is built from within'.[17] Filmmakers 'chronicled an era of relative peace, universal welfare provision and unprecedented social mobility' and at its height, an estimated 1000 industrial films about coal, oil, transport and many other aspects of industry were made each year, ranging stylistically from sober social investigation to glossy promotion as abstract art.[18] The majority of films were sponsored by industry itself and led to a 'blending of the documentary and industrial film into a single robust form',[19] the most grandiose aspect of which was the 'prestige documentary', a broader type of film that focused on practical issues as well as more societal, even philosophical themes couched in a form to give pleasure to the senses. Forsyth Hardy (1910-1994), director of Films of Scotland Committee from 1955 to 1975 and who was chiefly responsible for securing sponsorship,[20] has suggested that the industrial films made in association with it, attempted to provide 'a bigger horizon or wider sweep, a deeper significance' whilst striking a 'balance between … the [Scottish] national purpose and the satisfaction of the producer'.[21] The films to be discussed in this article fall into this category: a report on *The Big Mill*'s success at the 1963 Madrid Industrial Film Festival describes it as a 'prestige film',[22] and Brenda Davis' review of *Heart of Scotland* suggests that 'care and talent have been expended into making a prestige film following up the successful *Seawards The Great Ships* ...'[23]

Post-war documentary followed in the 'applied art' footsteps of the documentary Movement of the 1930s and 1940s, pioneered by Grierson, Humphrey Jennings and others. With reference specifically to the work of Laurence Henson and Edward McConnell, director and photographer respectively of *Heart of Scotland* and *The Big Mill*, Colin McArthur suggests it is 'the apotheosis of Griersonianism with its bringing "beauty" to bear on socio-economic processes'.[24] McConnell describes how in the early 1960s 'great philosophical discussions' with Grierson over 'a few gins' in Glasgow's Royal Hotel were 'great learning times'.[25] Grierson's belief in documentary's ability to reveal the poetry of the actual as a

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[17] Russell and Taylor, 'The Long Tail', 5.

[18] Patrick Russell, 'The Shadow of Progress—Documentary and post-war industry', in *Shadows of Progress* DVD booklet (London, 2013), 34-6 at 34.

[19] Russell and Taylor, 'The Long Tail', 5.

[20] Forsyth Hardy was a film critic, and biographer and long-standing acolyte of Grierson. Murray Grigor describes him as 'Grierson's Boswell' (Murray Grigor, personal interview by author (RCS, Glasgow, 31 January 2017)).

[21] Colin McArthur, 'An Interview with Forsyth Hardy', in Colin McArthur (ed.), *Scotch Reels* (London, 1982), 73-92 at 90.

[22] Kenneth Roberts, *Glasgow Herald Trade Review* (Jan. 1964), 79 (NLS 4/11/317).

[23] Brenda Davis, 'Cork Film Festival', *Films and Filming* (Nov. 1962), 62-4 at 62 (NLS 4/11/317). *Seawards* won the main award at Cork in 1960.

[24] Colin McArthur, 'Scotland and Cinema: The Iniquity of the Fathers', in Colin McArthur (ed.), *Scotch Reels* (London, 1982), 40-69 at 61. Hilary Harris, director of *Seawards*, says of Grierson's influence on post-war documentary that 'one has to think of the British documentary [M]ovement. The classic documentaries *Night Mail* and *Song of Ceylon*. I think *Seawards the Great Ships* is in that classic category. I like to think of myself as coming out of that tradition. [Grierson] … was an inspiration'. (Interview with Hilary Harris, New York, Mar. 11 1976 NLS 4/19/47).

[25] Janet McBain, interview with Eddie McConnell (12 Nov. 2014) (NLS 8/317). Henson was also present at these discussions, reminiscent of the drink-fuelled pub gatherings of the Movement thirty years before (Jack C. Ellis, *John Grierson: Life, Contributions, Influence* (Carbondale, Ill., 2000), 51; Hardy, *John Grierson*, 85.)

means of 'illumination and persuasion'[26] was deeply influential. He was trying to put the art into the sponsored film, thus allowing the filmmaker to explore the aesthetics of industrial processes.[27] Documentary filmmakers certainly showed greater technical and on occasion, aesthetic prowess after the war, recognized by some at the time: *Seawards* won an Oscar for Best Live Action Short at the Academy Awards in 1961, the first Scottish film to do so and was described by Wright as 'one of the most exciting documentaries from any source in recent times' and as 'an essay in shapes, sound and movement'.[28] *The Big Mill* won first prize at the Fourth International Industrial Film Festival, Madrid in 1963 and Kenneth Roberts avowed that it 'must by any standards be considered one of the best industrial films to be produced in the last ten years'.[29] Thus filmmakers like Harris, Henson and McConnell 'brought to their work the rich texture and assured poise that make it such a delight to revisit.'[30] In terms specifically of the image, as McConnell points out, technical limitations made it imperative that much thought and effort went into the composition and especially lighting of every shot, each taking up to two hours or more to set up. McConnell says Grierson liked the way they the lit scenes in *The Big Mill*, making 'everything a bit poetic'.[31] Extensive and elaborate tracking shots were also common with the *moving* camera replacing the dominance of pre-war static photography. This approach was inspired by McConnell's time at Glasgow School of Art in the 1950s.[32] He has echoed Grierson's comment from *I Remember* that 'cinema is like painting',[33] likening the work of Picasso (also referenced by Grierson), Cezanne and the Futurists to his approach:

> they were all trying to get dynamism and movement. They were pre-empting the movement of cinema. If you examine a Picasso—for example, a vase on a table—It is almost like an edited sequence from a film. A vase from above, the sides, looking down, looking up. Picasso had the totality of an image in an instant, and this is a thing that … film can do.[34]

The emphases on visual movement, manipulation of lighting and shot composition were enhanced and even shaped by the employment of musical scores that often called for substantial orchestral forces, and are key features of the films discussed in this article. Just like Benjamin Britten's, Walter Leigh's and William Alwyn's contribution to documentary before the war, scores were written by well-respected composers such as Malcolm Arnold and Elisabeth Lutyens. In the case of the films studied in this article, the composers were Iain Hamilton (1922-2000), pupil of Alwyn, and Frank Spedding (1929-2001) who studied with Vaughan Williams. In their original form, the music serves to bolster the promotional aspect of the films through lending them 'class', sophistication and not a little bombast; the use at times of quite modernist idioms (and those from popular music), emphasizes the idea of forward-looking contemporaneity. A review in The Scotsman states that Hamilton's 'first rate score' for *Seawards* is 'as arresting musically as anything shown on the screen',[35] whilst

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[26] John Grierson, 'Art and Revolution' (1962), 1-12 at 4 (JGA G7.56.6).
[27] Eddie McConnell, personal interview with author (NLS, Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, 15 March 2017).
[28] Allen Wright, 'The Best Film Ever Made in Scotland', *The Scotsman* (2 May 1960), n.p. (NLS 4/11/510).
[29] Roberts, Glasgow Herald Trade Review, 79.
[30] Russell and Taylor, 'The Long Tail', 7.
[31] McBain, interview with Eddie McConnell.
[32] McConnell, personal interview.
[33] Grierson, *I Remember*, 4.
[34] David Donald, 'Business Lunch', *Scotland Magazine* (Jan. 1964), 40-43 at 41 (NLS 4/11/317).
[35] N.a., 'Scots Films a Joy to the Eye', *The Scotsman* (23 Nov. 1963), n.p. (NLS 4/11/317).

Spedding's score for *The Big Mill* is similarly described as 'almost as effective' as the 'brilliant photography and editing'.[36]

Like the pre-war Movement films, this focus on aesthetics was tempered by the demands of the sponsors who had an obvious vested interest in the films' content and style, leading to a lack of a critical approach that has drawn criticism. The 'unquestioned commitment to society' and to the social democratic consensus, the lack of partisanship, critique or political context[37] meant such films often promoted the industry they were depicting without regard to human or environmental costs inherent in many industrial workplaces and processes. In 1957 Reisz attacked the makers of prestige documentaries suggesting that for all their polished achievements they were little more than 'poets making a living in the advertising industry discuss[ing] their advertiser's copy as [if it were] poetry'.[38] Lindsay Anderson sums up *Seawards* as 'glossy' and 'well-manufactured' but ultimately 'just another advertisement'.[39] McArthur praises the 'great pictorial beauty and … sense of social community and unity' in Henson and McConnell's work but contends its 'principal limitation is equally evident: a failure to accommodate analysis and contradiction.'[40] The result is that given the decline of the shipyards at the time, *Seawards* 'offers no comfort to Clydeside workers or guidance as to the historical processes which have put them out of work.'[41] Films of Scotland Committee's 'projection of Scotland'[42] remit was partly responsible since its 'Scotland on the Move' narrative sought to show Scotland as a successful, modern industrial nation albeit one that recognized its important links to the land and to the past.[43] *Heart of Scotland* publicity material for example describes it as a 'poetic interpretation of Stirlingshire', bringing 'a vision of the future in a country whose people have learned to persuade the land to their purpose'.[44] Hardy and Grierson were themselves critical of the historically dominant backward looking and melancholic narratives of Scotland projected by literature and film as either sentimental and romantic or parochial and narrow,[45] but McArthur suggests the pull of the sentimental and parochial still proved too strong for many filmmakers and producers who had 'no critical distance' from it. Instead, Films of Scotland generally favoured the 'celebratory' and the 'incantatory', rather than taking a critical, politicized approach to Scottish history and contemporary life.[46] Even Henson himself conceded that 'too many of our films are flawed because they go to pieces selling something' and that the need to include 'qualifying passages [in *The Big Mill*] … weakened the thing as a dramatic piece'.[47]

Whilst such criticisms do have validity, Russell suggests rather that industrial documentaries of the democratic consensus era were more concerned with recapturing 'for adult eyes and ears the excitement a young child might feel when taken inside a factory

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[36] Allen Wright, 'A Big Mill Makes a Big Film', *The Scotsman* (24 Jun. 1963), n.p. (NLS 4/11/317).
[37] Patrick Russell and James P. Taylor, 'Themes in Post-War Documentary', in Patrick Russell and James P. Taylor (eds.), *Shadows of Progress*, (Basingstoke, 2010), 108-114 at 109.
[38] Russell and Taylor, 'The Long Tail', 9.
[39] Lindsay Anderson, *Arts Review* transcript (broadcast 9.45-10.15 p.m. 9 Jun. 1960, Scottish Home Service), 1-2 at 2 (NLS 4/11/645).
[40] McArthur, 'Scotland and Cinema', 62.
[41] Ibid. 63.
[42] Forsyth Hardy, 'The Projection of Scotland' (radio article transcript, c. 1956), 1 (NLS 4/19/33). The notion is stated by Chair of the Committee, Alex King.
[43] McArthur, 'Scotland and Cinema', 60.
[44] N.a., *Scotland on Screen* programme (25 Mar. 1962), 53 (NLS 4/11/725).
[45] McArthur, 'Scotland and Cinema' 40-69. For example Hardy asserted that in films like *Seawards* and *The Big Mill*, 'the old image of the kilt and the caber is submerged' and that 'an arresting new screen picture of Scotland emerges (Forsyth Hardy, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 18 Nov. 1963, n.p. (NLS 4/1/317)).
[46] McArthur, 'Scotland and Cinema', 58.
[47] Donald, 'Business Lunch', 41.

whose vivid sights and sounds envelop and overwhelm'.[48] The audio-visual approach of filmmakers like Harris, Henson and McConnell was primarily aimed at capturing this child-like excitement and creating films that should be pleasurable to watch, often in an unashamedly sensual manner. Of *The Big Mill* McConnell says simply that he was 'more into the aesthetics, the beauty, the wonder … as opposed to social realism or contention, politics etc.',[49] effectively challenging the idea that documentary need necessarily always be an explicitly 'social art'.[50] This child-like wonder is also manifest in Grierson's alternative documentary mode of 'magical' 'representation' that is fully realised when he removed all the commentaries and chose clips already dominated in the originals by artful photography and evocative music for his *I Remember* compilation. This increases the importance of visual spectacle and the sensory role of music and diegetic sound and the significantly compressed results, are by documentary standards, non-representational audio-visual poems. He *embraces* McArthur's critique of the celebratory and incantatory to conjure magic and wonder at the world around us from poetry and abstraction. In doing so he attempts to bypass questions about 'adequate' representations of Scotland or the workforce and those about the pitfalls of sponsorship and supplant them with others of a more universal nature, to be discussed later.

In summary, Dominic Sandbrook describes the post-war consensus era as one of 'optimism … liberated from the prejudices of the past' and importantly an age that 'worshipped science and technology'.[51] It was an age that emphasized the physical, the material. Things were going to be physically, materially better and most problems—social and even moral ones—were seen to be practical ones, and would be solved in practical ways. The Films of Scotland Committee embraced this notion and allied it to the idea of projecting a modern, industrial, progressive 'Scotland on the Move' alongside more traditional tropes. In the absence of a critical approach or one that focussed on social elements, visually and sonically entertaining, even ground-breaking and thought-provoking films were produced. This focus on aesthetics emphasized a sensory response, engendered via visual display and musical emotiveness and that is also physical: the world wouldn't just work better, it would *look* and *sound* and *feel* better too.

Pl. I. Eddie McConnell filming with a Newman Sinclair camera at Corrie na Ciste (Glencoe) for *As Long as You're Young* (Glasgow Films, 1962). © National Library of Scotland.

II *I Remember, I Remember, Hitchcock on Grierson* and Grierson's Aesthetic

I Remember came about after Alex King proposed to Grierson in early 1967 that Films of Scotland and Scottish Television should collaborate on a compilation film to celebrate his 70th year and that showcased Grierson's contribution to world cinema through documentary film. He was reluctant about it, disliking the idea of a 'personality cult in documentary' but

[48] Russell, 'The Shadow of Progress', 35.

[49] McConnell, personal interview. Crucially, one of Hardy's key roles was to keep the sponsor away from the filmmaker whilst trying to persuade the sponsor the films needed to be watchable. Letters between Hardy, Ralph Hillis, Marketing Manager at Colvilles Steel, and Robert Riddell Black, producer of *The Big Mill*, illustrate this: Hillis states that whilst they did not wish to 'curb the license of the … Director', the main aim should be to show they had 'a product worth selling.' (Ralph Hillis, letter to Forsyth Hardy, 14 Mar. 1962. (NLS 4/11/424)). Hardy agrees but suggests such a 'purpose cannot be pressed without lessening the likelihood of having it generally shown'. He writes to Riddell Black the same day emphasizing the need for the film to sell Colville's steel but not at the expense 'of producing an outstanding film' (Forsyth Hardy, letters to Ralph Hillis and Robert Riddell Black, 21 Mar. 1962 (NLS 4/11/424).

[50] Anderson, *Arts Review*, 2.

eventually agreed,[52] expressing a general desire to get away from the 'familiar terms' of the 'documentary story' and 'proposed a fresh angle'.[53] Hardy confirms Grierson's commitment to the project saying the he 'took the decisions, selected the excerpts, edited the compilation and wrote and spoke the commentary'.[54] Along with the Grierson re-edited sequences of the three 1960s industrial documentaries under discussion that take up a substantial twenty minutes of the fifty-two-minute film, clips from six older films, including *Drifters* and *Night Mail* were included. It was shown before 2000 people at Edinburgh Film Festival[55] and as a self-confessed propagandist, he would have been conscious of the occasion's import and its 'incantatory' potential. Despite McArthur and others' criticisms he *was* also conscious of the political, shown by a talk 'The Motion Picture and Political Leadership', he gave the day before the film showing (24 August 1968). This talk is crucial in understanding what lay behind Grierson's aesthetic approach in *I Remember* and elsewhere and will be discussed shortly.

Pl. II. John Grierson presents *I Remember, I Remember* (1968). © STV

There is little evidence of how the talk and film were received but in-house, the *I Remember* linking material was quickly seen as problematic—Hardy makes clear that neither he, Grierson, Murray Grigor (assistant director of Films of Scotland), nor STV liked Grierson's presentation that was marred by his toothache and poor sound quality.[56] STV and Grierson sought a solution and announced in *The Sunday Express* on 2 February 1969 that they had arranged with Alfred Hitchcock to compere a TV tribute to 'king of the documentaries', John Grierson.[57] Grierson had been asked by STV the previous December to suggest a 'major figure in the film world' to do the links,[58] though in fact STV had already written to Hitchcock in October 1968[59] asking him to speak the linking material, to which he agreed in December.[60] A script, influenced by filmed interviews with Hitchcock and the introductions to his *Alfred Hitchcock Hour* programmes was written by Jack Gerson, with the material eventually being shot on 4 February by Hitchcock's team on the set of his latest film, *Topaz*.[61] STV's primary motive for re-shooting the linking passages was to make it 'more suitable for television' and 'highly "box-office" for our medium'.[62] Grierson was honoured by Hitchcock's involvement, also commenting it was a better television idea and would secure a better return, especially in North America.[63] STV were happy to cover all additional costs though Hardy was irritated at the removal of all references to Films of Scotland, an alteration that had the inevitable effect of lessening the Scottish promotional element.[64]

Pl. III. Alfred Hitchcock presents *Hitchcock on Grierson* (1969). © STV

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[52] Hardy, *John Grierson*, 225-6
[53] Films of Scotland Committee, meeting minutes (1 Feb. 1968), at 4-5.
[54] Hardy, *John Grierson*, 225-6.
[55] Ibid. 230.
[56] Forsyth Hardy, letters, 4 and 11 Feb. 1969 (NLS 4/11/476).
[57] Hardy had not been consulted, much to his irritation.
[58] William Brown (STV Managing Director), letter to John Grierson, 4 Dec. 1968 (JGA G8A.2.3.).
[59] Francis Essex (STV Controller of Programmes), letter to Alfred Hitchcock, 16 Oct. 1968 (JGA G8A.5.).
[60] Peggy Robertson (Assistant to Mr. Hitchcock), letter to Jill Brown (Essex's secretary), 3 Dec. 1968 (JGA G8A.5.).
[61] Herbert Coleman (Alfred Hitchcock Productions), letter to Francis Essex, 6 Feb. 1969 (JGA G8A.5.).
[62] William Brown, letter to Forsyth Hardy, 17 Feb. 1969 (NLS 4/11/476). The programme was eventually broadcast on 4 August 1970 (unknown newspaper TV listing 4 Aug. 1970, 10.30 p.m. (NLS 4/11/476)).
[63] John Grierson, telegram to Francis Essex, 8 Feb. 1969 (NLS 4/11/476).
[64] Forsyth Hardy, letter to William Brown, 20 Feb. 1969 (NLS 4/11/476).

The film clips shown in *Hitchcock on Grierson* are the same as in *I Remember* though slightly curtailed in places and though Gerson's script echoes Grierson's closely, it rarely quotes directly from it. One important exception is in the lead up to the clip of *Seawards* where Hitchcock talks about Glasgow being 'considered by many to be dank, dark and shapeless. Yet to John this was precisely what it wasn't. The grey bulk of buildings, cranes, rearing up from the Clyde basin, the shape of big ships on the river….'.[65] This is taken directly from Grierson where in the same preamble in *I Remember* he states with reference to his schooling in Glasgow that he did not like the 'English professor saying it was a bit dank and a bit dismal, and especially … shapeless—because that was precisely what it wasn't. It was shapes—big shapes—that Glasgow was full of. In fact I waived a hand at the Glade of Cranes and told the English professor to have a better look'.[66] Grierson's comments about abstraction quoted at the start of this article follow the clip and are echoed by Hitchcock where he suggests that 'John considers the cinema to be like painting … he has seen, worked and fostered the documentary since its early outlines of reality through to present achievements in abstract sophistication … Like an abstract painting drawn from a heightened realism. Shape, form, colour, moulded into pattern and design'.[67] On the surface this seems to be very much about aesthetics—pattern, shape, colour, and about an appreciation of how this manifests itself in our industrialized world yet there is a much deeper philosophical background to Grierson's thinking and a higher, potentially political purpose.

So what lay behind Grierson's decision to re-edit the films for *I Remember* into versions that have little semantic content or material requiring cognitive engagement? What was his 'fresh angle' and why did he also significantly reduce the representation of people and sublimate the sense of locality? His extensive original treatments for *Seawards* and *Heart of Scotland* are full of ideas relating to the detail of industrial processes, history and historical figures, the development of business and labour, 'Scotland on the Move' and so on. The vast majority of this is absented by the removal of the commentary, leaving no conventional 'documentary value', the phrase Grierson himself used in 1926 in launching the term 'documentary'. He re-emphasized this as late as 1962 in a talk called 'Art and Revolution' at the North Carolina Film Board in which he describes documentary as an 'instrument … of education and illumination'.[68] However, as Ian Aitken points out, the apparent contradiction between these ideas supporting the notion of 'documentary value' and that of his more famous definition of documentary as the 'creative treatment of actuality' and the exploration of poetic forms in Movement films like *Coal Face* and *Night Mail*, is a misnomer. The explanation lies in the importance of philosophical idealism to Grierson's thinking and practice stemming from his university study of Hegel, Kant, Bradley and others. It is crucial to his exploration of the aesthetic for social and political purposes in documentary and explains the Movement's embracing of more avant-garde practices to that end.[69]

As early as the time of his own *Drifters*, Grierson explained that '[i]n documentary we deal with the actual, and in that sense the real. But the *really real* … is something deeper than that. The only reality which counts in the end is the interpretation which is profound'.[70] Relating this to Grierson's philosophical idealism Aitken suggests his approach is essentialist and based on the concept of an underlying transcendental reality, drawing a 'distinction between the real and the phenomenal.'[71] It privileges the notion of an abstract, 'poetic

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[65] Jack Gerson, 'John Grierson film (title t.b.a.): Mr. Hitchcock's commentary' (1969), 1-6 at 5 (JGA G8A.5.).
[66] Grierson, *I Remember*, 4.
[67] Gerson, 'John Grierson film', 6.
[68] Grierson, 'Art and Revolution', 4.
[69] Ian Aitken, Film and Reform: John Grierson and the Documentary Movement (London, 1990).
[70] Ibid. 109.
[71] Ibid.

reality which existed beneath the rational'[72] and for Grierson the 'intrinsic empirical naturalism of the documentary representation must become organized in order to express general truths, which exist at the level of abstraction, beyond the empirical'.[73] Such a philosophy is fundamental to understanding the whole of the documentary Movement's key features and shortcomings.[74] This is later reflected in Grierson's script for *I Remember* with his talk of the cinema being like the abstraction of Picasso and how order and pattern are inherently beautiful and underlie everything: 'we live by putting things into orders and patterns … in the school, the kitchen, the field and the factory … everywhere'.[75]

In the same 1962 North Carolina speech he also talks about documentary's role in 'revealing the poetry of the actual'[76] and discusses his formative experiences with painter Rudolph Weisenborn in 1920s Chicago. Weisenborn inspired him to focus not on the 'worthiness of [its] citizens' but to look at the visual dynamics and abstract shapes and materials of the modern American cityscape with fresh eyes.[77] Grierson's conclusion was that 'what some people see as an abstract art may be in fact the most naturalistic and realistic description of what we see … as we move about in the metropolitan world … this new way of seeing from every angle and in terms of a dynamic whole, is in fact becoming a natural necessary habit of vision'.[78] The translation of the principles of philosophical idealism and the abstraction of the modern built environment to the shipyards of the Clyde, or Grangemouth oil refinery featured in *Heart of Scotland* or a *The Big Mill*'s steel making is therefore, not so big a step.

But what 'underlying reality' was Grierson really concerned with? In the speech on 'The Motion Picture and Political Leadership' Grierson gave at the Edinburgh Film Festival the day before *I Remember* was shown, he laments the 'retreat from visual poetry in the cinema' and the failure of political power to understand it as a 'vital instrument for inspiring people' and to make it a 'medium of national inspiration'. He places emphasis on 'emotional leadership of a life-giving order', national persuasion, hope, ambition and confidence; 'dreams and beliefs'.[79] Grierson believed it was philosophical idealism that could 'provide fundamental answers to … the nature of democracy within mass society'.[80] In an attack on the word-heavy medium of television he says 'the great illusion of today is that discussion is all-important and it is from discussion action derives' whereas the general public becomes bored if not despairing of the intelligentsia's parading of society's inner contradictions. The result is that 'the English documentary film is a morass of information and debate with no deep emotional, not to say aesthetic remainder'.[81] For Grierson it is the emotional and aesthetic part that has the greatest role in creating inspiration and dreams and from which action is best derived. He concludes by calling for documentary film to focus on the 'imaginative life of the people' and that political power should take note how this approach coincides with its 'vital interests'.[82] Given the contemporaneousness of this speech and his re-edits for *I Remember*, the rationale for his changes becomes clearer: he was seeking to inspire on a deep emotional level, to get to the '*really real*' and give imaginative life to the people.

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[72] Ibid. 114.
[73] Ibid. 109.
[74] Ibid. 184.
[75] Grierson, *I Remember*, 5.
[76] Grierson, 'Art and Revolution', 4.
[77] Ibid. 5.
[78] Ibid. 5-6.
[79] John Grierson, 'The Motion Picture and Political Leadership' (1968), 1-15 at 2-6 (JGA G7.14.1.).
[80] Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 194.
[81] Grierson, 'The Motion Picture and Political Leadership', 4-5.
[82] Ibid. 15.

The creative strategies used to trigger imaginative thought and emotional engagement, have been explored by John Corner when discussing the idea of documentary as an aesthetic project. He has spoken of how combinations of sound and image can enable feelings and ideas to 'condense' upon the 'objects, bodies and places' depicted, and then in turn, be changed by them. At the same time, those physical elements are understood as being part of the developing themes of the film. This process is both 'sensual and intellectual', committed to authentic documentary representation, yet 'possessed of a dreamlike potential for the indirectly suggestive and associative'. [83] The use of music makes the process of emotion attaching itself to physical things, the mixing of the sensual and intellectual, and dreamlike suggestion, more powerful, enabling sound and image to 'connect knowing to feeling'.[84]. The abstract visual representation of the physical structures and processes of industrial workplaces like a steel mill, shipyard or oil refinery are more than just 'pretty shapes' and 'jazzy cutting', a criticism of Anderson of *Seawards*.[85] Those shapes become imbued with 'feelings and ideas' through the sensual visual strategies discussed and crucially by the parallel manipulation of sound and above all, music. The feelings this produces in the viewer engender 'knowing'. The contemporary documentary discourse of proceeding by debate and argument, interviewer, interviewee and 'talking head' that stems from the rise of television in the 1960s and is today the mainstay of documentary, has a very real and important educative and social function and can produce powerful effects (not to say entertainment). However, as a result, any focus on non-verbal aesthetics, if present at all, tends to be used to support the verbal and remains subservient to it and this is still mostly true in the commentary-laden original versions of the films under discussion. It is therefore much less effective at producing *affect* and therefore for Grierson, *effecting change*.[86] Avoiding information and verbal discourse in his compilation re-edits and focussing instead on visual and musical abstraction, Grierson enables the 'shapes' on the screen to become imbued with 'feelings and ideas' as the most 'naturalistic' means to highlight the beauty, resourcefulness and possibilities of the modern world. Grierson's approach *in I Remember*, is a consciousness raising exercise in which 'feeling' becomes 'knowing'.

III The Films and the Music of Iain Hamilton and Frank Spedding

Pl. IV. Title stills of *Seawards*, *Heart of Scotland* and *The Big Mill*

Though imbued with the sensibilities of their original conceptions, the clips Grierson edited for *I Remember* and later used in *Hitchcock on Grierson* take on a distinct life of their own and with their own unique resonances. The removal of the commentary allows the audience to better perceive important aesthetic aspects of the original films but also allows the audio-visual material to transcend its original context and become more abstract and less earth-bound.[87] The scored music takes centre stage and even the relatively rare location sound

[83] John Corner, 'Television, Documentary and the Category of the Aesthetic', *Screen*, 44 (2003), 92–100 at 97.
[84] John Corner, 'Sounds Real: Music and Documentary', *Popular Music*, 21 (2002), 357–66 at 366.
[85] Anderson, *Arts Review*, 2.
[86] The form of *I Remember* and *Hitchcock on Grierson* is of itself pertinent. Both films could not be simpler in format: a man sits at a desk and reads a script direct to camera consisting of quite lengthy and uninterrupted introductions of the clips that run unbroken for up to five minutes at a time, taking up more than three-quarters of the film. Today, compilation films are edited many times faster, filled with reflections and anecdotes of numerous interviewees and any unadorned illustrative material edited to last no more than a few seconds. The material cut for *I Remember* is also unique, so the compilation films are creative rather than just a reflective 'look back'.
[87] This eschewing of verbal explanation was rare for sponsored industrial documentaries since the ability to promote the sponsors' wares was perceived as diminished. One notable exception is Paul

elements take on a musical quality since they are often explored through the application of *musique concrète* techniques. Their sound therefore has a profound impact on how we see and understand the films and the removal of the commentary significantly affects our interpretation of them. There is a certain elision here that is worth noting. Despite the obvious importance that music plays, Grierson does not mention it anywhere in *I Remember*. His focus is entirely on the visual: prior to the *Seawards* extract he explains that 'I've stripped it of all its words so you can *see* the Glasgow I've so long been thinking about'. At a Films of Scotland Committee meeting he describes *I Remember* as 'purely visual' and through his review of the material for it, says he was 'astonished … at the visual quality the Committee had achieved' in the newer films.[88] Again, he does not mention their musical scores despite the structuring of the re-edits of the films he conducted being clearly informed by the structures of the scores themselves. The explanation for Grierson's reluctance to discuss music may lie in his own general ignorance and lack of affinity for the form. Basil Wright, who was in charge of the gramophone record accompaniments for the early showings of Grierson's silent *Drifters*, says it was his choice of *Fingal's Cave* that was approved by Grierson, who 'never pretended to know much about music and usually deferred to the opinion of others'.[89] There is virtually no serious discussion about music in any of Grierson's writings and one rare mention in his article about the introduction of sound at the GPO Film Unit is revealing: 'if we want music—*and we do not want it much*—we find it cheaper to have it written for us'.[90] However, the transcendent process enabled by the removal of the commentaries and the consequent revealing of the power of music in *I Remember*, did not happen by chance. Grierson's actions down the years in getting the music 'written for us' showed understanding of this power, not least in his employment of composers like Benjamin Britten. It shows that beyond Grierson's prowess as a film editor, his strength lay in recognizing and supporting the talents of others, not least in composers of music. It is therefore to the talent of the composers of the films Grierson re-edited, Iain Hamilton and Frank Spedding that we must now turn. Whilst the ensuing audio-visual analyses focus on Grierson's re-edits, the origins, criticisms and more prosaic nature of the original films will be discussed since the general sensibility of their original conception, their images and musical soundtracks are melded into those re-edits, as well as being in part, transformed by them. The focus of that transformation is in the music, the context and general character of which will be addressed first. Figure 2 should be referred to for the detail of Grierson's edits in both *I Remember* and *Hitchcock on Grierson* in relation to their original incarnations.

Figure 2 Table of film edits used in *I Remember* and *Hitchcock on Grierson*.

With Movement films like *Coal Face* (1935) about coal mining in Britain, scored by Benjamin Britten, Grierson and his colleagues (notably sound expert Alberto Cavalcanti) had already explored notions of abstract depictions of modernity. Christopher Dromey describes

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Dickson's epic *Stone into Steel* (1960) with music by Edward Williams, an award-winning film and a prime example of 'glossy promotion as abstract art' (Russell, 'The Shadow of Progress', 34) but one ultimately unpopular with its sponsors (Leo Enticknap, 'I don't think he did anything after that: *Paul Dickson*', in Patrick Russell and James P. Taylor (eds.), *Shadows of Progress* (Basingstoke, 2010), 156-75 at 169-70. Other examples include the musically driven work of Geoffrey Jones for British Transport, such as *Snow* (1963) with musical arrangements by Johnny Hawksworth and 'music effects' by pioneering Radiophonic workshop composer, Daphne Oram; and Films of Scotland's own *Space and Light* (Grigor, 1972) about a modernist seminary in Cardross, also scored by Frank Spedding.

[88] Films of Scotland Committee, Meeting minutes (19 Jul. 1968), at 4 (JGA G7.9.29).

[89] Basil Wright, letter in *Sight and Sound*, Winter, 1975.

[90] John Grierson, 'The G.P.O. Gets Sound', *Cinema Quarterly*, 2(4) (1934), 215-222, at 216.

Coal Face as 'recognizably modernist',[91] its technically innovative use of a noise orchestra made up of everyday objects cited by Donald Mitchell as 'imagining a kind of *musique concrète*'[92] and by Britten himself as 'entirely experimental stuff'.[93] Corner describes the combination with harmonically ambiguous and timbrally harsh piano music and a freely modulating ethereal choir reciting W.H. Auden's poetry, as 'modernist realism.'[94] This seemingly contradictory phrase is logical in terms of documentary since whilst authentic representation must be adhered to, it is pushed to its limits by some Movement and post-war filmmakers. Drawing on Russian avant-garde film especially they abstracted the photography of realist representation, akin perhaps to the warped visions of Picasso, a Grierson and McConnell favourite, and then married it to timbrally and harmonically adventurous music using similarly 'warped' tonality crossing into the abstraction of atonality. Gerson allies this approach to the idea of 'abstract *sophistication*' in *Hitchcock on Grierson*, something echoed by the attitude of the post-war avant-garde generally and employed by Films of Scotland filmmakers to suggest a more refined and modern Scotland than traditionally depicted.

When it comes to the films under discussion, whilst the musical tenor of Hamilton's and Spedding's scores for *Seawards*, *Heart of Scotland* and *The Big Mill* is essentially tonal (or modal), both draw on modernist musical concerns at times such as near or complete atonality, unusual instrumentation and timbral extremes. Their approach is in keeping with what Matthew Riley characterizes as the British approach to 'aesthetic modernity': technical innovation mattered but was not seen as 'the necessary and inevitable response to the contemporary situation in either music or society' and so for some British composers 'the new vocabulary of music took its place next to the old and could be drawn on freely and eclectically'.[95] Ben Earle suggests this 'broadening and relaxation of tone' that occurred from the 1930s, though not ultimately constituting modernism proper, can be allied to Jameson's description of cinematic history as '"*art deco* representationality", a historically specific form of *realism* … wherein "features of the modern … have been 'popularized'."'[96] Corner's 'modernist realism' dialectic comes to mind again and it is these characterizations of the British approach that apply to Hamilton and Spedding's 'modernism'. Hamilton was an admirer of Beethoven and Berlioz[97] but had a 'constantly developing creative outlook'[98] and at the time of writing the *Seawards* score, his concert music was deeply influenced by serialism, Schoenberg and especially the works of Webern.[99] Yet around the same time he also produced some if his most committed works in the light music vein, a music he loved,[100]

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[91] Christopher Dromey, 'Benjamin Britten's "Pierrot" Ensembles', in Matthew Riley (ed.), *British Music and Modernism, 1895—1960* (Farnham, 2010), 221-247 at 231.

[92] Donald Mitchell, *Britten and Auden in the Thirties: the Year 1936* (London, 1981), 83. For discussion about Grierson's writings about the creative use of diegetic sound in documentary see also Geoffrey Cox, '"There must be a poetry of sound that none of us knows …" Early British documentary film and the prefiguring of *musique concrète*', *Organised Sound*, 22 (2017), 172-186.

[93] Philip Reed, 'Britten in the Cinema: *Coal Face*', in Mervyn Cooke (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten* (Cambridge, 1999), 54-77 at 76.

[94] John Corner, *The Art of Record* (Manchester, 1996), 60.

[95] Matthew Riley, 'Introduction', in Matthew Riley (ed.), *British Music and Modernism, 1895—1960* (Farnham, 2010), 1-11 at 9.

[96] Ben Earle, '"The real thing—at last"? Historicizing Humphrey Searle', in Matthew Riley (ed.), *British Music and Modernism, 1895—1960* (Farnham, 2010), 293-325 at 303-4. He includes composers such as Vaughan Williams, Prokofiev, Roy Harris and indeed Hamilton in this category.

[97] Murray Schafer, *British Composers in Interview*, (London, 1963), 23.

[98] Frederick Rimmer, 'The Twentieth Century Renaissance', in Kenneth Elliot and Frederick Rimmer (eds.), *A History of Scottish Music* (London, 1973), 77-84 at 79.

[99] Iain Hamilton, 'Serial Composition Today', *Tempo* 55/56 (1960), 8-12, at 8-9.

[100] Schafer, *British Composers*, 156-7.

notably the *Scottish Dances* (1956) commissioned for the BBC Light Music Festival, which he cites as a favourite of his own works.[101] Spedding also had a catholic outlook, was an admirer of Schoenberg and especially Webern,[102] along with Haydn, Mozart, late Beethoven, Liszt and Kurt Weill: he 'was devoid of musical snobbery in a way which only those with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the repertoire seem to manage'.[103] His score for the later, *The Hand of Adam* (Grigor, 1975) about eighteenth-century Scottish architect Robert Adam affectingly combines serialism with occasional 'windows' of classical tonality. What this leads to in his scores for *Heart of Scotland* and *The Big Mill* is an eclectic mix of musical styles and widely varying levels of dissonance but composed in such a way that it generally all seems of a piece. Like Hamilton, his work is also marked by a strong sense of the dramatic, rhythmic dynamism and an adventurous approach to instrumental colour. So the abstract sophistication Hitchcock speaks of is characterised by some genuinely abstract material in musical terms (atonality, high dissonance, stark textures) but also by the way both composers, and especially Spedding, handle tonal material such that it is generally freed from its normal functional restrictions. This tends to 'abstract' the tonality in that its harmony is very often 'extended', making any tonal centres vague, and movement between tonal areas primarily a function of the composers' whim and his musical interpretation of the image sequences. The advanced technical facility with which juxtaposition and combination are achieved and that allows convincing movement between tonal and atonal—a mark of both composers' work, exudes Gerson's 'sophistication' if also a certain conservatism in modernist terms. It is also at the sonic root of Grierson's 'magic' since the musical material has a freedom of expression that transcends style and genre and floats free of 'political' musical concerns, lending it autonomy but also suggesting a lack of distinctive *musical* commitment. It is often couched via driving rhythms and an extravert exuberance, lending a sense of confidence no doubt inspired in part by the promotional bent of the films in question. In their original filmic versions, this tends to give the music a certain overblown and superficial quality when combined with the laudatory and at times hyperbolic commentaries but transcends this in the commentary-free compilation films' settings.

The following audio-visual analyses deal with the films in the order of their original release dates. The extracts from each film are dealt with separately rather then thematically since Grierson's notion of documentary 'magic' is only fully apparent when one views the sequences as a whole. The sectional shifts in tone of musical and visual / sonic material that ensue from the re-edits is part of this magic. Nevertheless, though the issue of musical and visual abstraction is common to all as is a the use of harsh dissonances and modality, certain distinctive features are highlighted: musical serialism and the creative use and manipulation of location sounds in *Seawards*, the folk-like musical appeal to Scottishness combined with an eerie, unsettling strangeness in *Heart of Scotland*, and the use of a jazz-style in *The Big Mill*.

Seawards the Great Ships

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[101] Ibid. 23. Talking of how some were mystified by how he began writing light works at the same time as his serious interest in serialism was developing, he says that 'one must fulfill to the best of one's ability all one's talents, and only a snobbish creature would fail to understand this' (Ibid. 156-7)

[102] Like many post-war composers, Spedding admired Webern above all of the Second Viennese school, though understood it took time to appreciate him (Rory Boyle, personal interview by author RCS, Glasgow, 31 January 2017).

[103] Robert Inglis, 'Frank Spedding: An acclaimed composer, a gentle and original teacher, and a witty friend', *The Herald* (Nov 5. 2001). Retrieved from: http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12135770.Frank_Spedding__An_acclaimed_composer__a_gentle_and_original_teacher__and_a_witty_friend/

Seawards was Grierson's idea. As early as 1955 he wrote to Arthur Elton about a trip to Glasgow and discussions with the Films of Scotland Committee about

> a film on the Clyde with a centre piece in the building of a tanker … a musical documentary in five or six movements: all with a rhythmic documentary basis … A going to work sequence could, for example, be sheer Rene Clair, with a choral basis as in Sous les Toits but with all the tinkling of trams and the tooting of tugs on the tiver [sic] thrown in.[104]

What Grierson actually means by a 'musical documentary' is unclear, as he does not specifically mention music elsewhere in the film's treatment. It is as likely to refer to his idea that the adoption of symphonic forms in documentary by 'city symphonists' like Walter Ruttmann, were based on 'the building of separate images into movements', [105] than to music itself. However, his idea of using the tooting of tugs was eventually translated into the opening declamatory brass tones of Iain Hamilton's score. In a letter to Riddell Black in December 1959, Hardy suggested they 'could be used in an orchestrated way in the Clyde sequence' though at this late stage Hamilton had still not been engaged (the film premiered in March 1960).[106] He eventually scored *Seawards* for a brass ensemble of three trumpets, four horns, two trombones and one bass trombone, with timpani. The music is written as three 'Sequences' of which part of I and the whole of II are used in *I Remember*.

In the treatment Grierson produced, what he calls 'Sequence IV', details the eventual opening sequence of the film, extensively used in *I Remember*. He describes how it should illustrate 'the infinite variety in the glorious shapes of ships' and with 'enough volume to knock somebody's eye out'.[107] Hamilton took this cue and created loud, dissonant and initially atonal music to accompany the dramatic backwards launch of a huge ship (Sequence I). In the original film it begins with the lone sound of a shipbuilder's pneumatic drill intoning as the credits roll over a slow pan down the stern of a ship under construction, viewed from below. The *I Remember* edit cuts in with the ensuing loud opening declarative call of a high trumpet G[108] (marked 'Propeller sinking'), as we see the stern of possibly the same completed vessel, towering over us and plunging into the water for the first time. The slowly rising dramatic crescendo of Hamilton's brass music invigorates the sequence considerably. The instrument entries, sounding what amounts to a serially-inspired chromatic totality, are staggered across the first five bars, their notes sustained, creating the huge fortissimo crescendo (marked 'Turmoil: ship emerges', Ex. 1). Coupled with the ensuing syncopated rhythmic ostinatos, the music bears resemblance to passages in his fully twelve-tone score, *Sinfonia for Two Orchestras*. Premiered in August 1959 at the Edinburgh International Festival in celebration of the Robert Burns bicentenary, *Sinfonia*'s abstract, non-tonal nature caused much controversy and was described by the president of the Burns Federation at the time as 'rotten and ghastly'.[109] The employment of Hamilton very shortly after this premiere was a risky and presumably deliberate move by Films of Scotland and certainly typical of

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[104] John Grierson, letter to Arthur Elton, 6 Mar. 1955 (JGA G6.38.28.).
[105] Forsyth Hardy, *John Grierson*, 100.
[106] Forsyth Hardy, letter to Robert Riddell Black, 1 Dec. 1959 (NLS 4/11/510). Hamilton's name *is* suggested in the letter along with Alan Rawsthorne.
[107] John Grierson, 'Shipbuilding: Outline Treatment' (1958), 1-9 at 3 (NLS 4/11/510).
[108] Iain Hamilton, *Seawards the Great Ships*, Sequence I (c. 1960) (NYPL B.36 f.14).
[109] Conrad Wilson, 'Iain Hamilton', *The Herald* (Aug 5. 2000). Retrieved from: http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12185076.Iain_Hamilton/ Hamilton was probably engaged due to the 'couthy' accessibility and success of his *Scottish Dances* of 1956 that uses well-known tunes to which Robert Burns set to some of his poetry (Paul Conway, *Iain Hamilton (1922-2000*), retrieved from http://www.musicweb-international.com/Hamilton/index.htm.

Grierson. Duncan Petrie describes *Seawards* as a 'modernist celebration of industrial beauty and awe'[110] though without reference to the music, yet Hamilton's contribution to this idea is significant. Hamilton has spoken of being emotionally moved by the construction of buildings,[111] and of his early training and practice as an engineer he says it gave him a 'fine sense of design and proportion so that form and structure have always been prime concerns for me in music'.[112] This clearly relates to the opening passage of *Seawards* in musical terms but also applies to Grierson's emphasis on shape and pattern. The two coincide as the shape of the rising passage of notes on the page in Ex.1 *and* their resultant sound, mirrors the shape of the great hull of the ship that almost fills the screen.[113] Modernist realism, imbued with feeling—not that of the workers or even of their human world but of Hamilton's emotive response to construction and structure, director Harris's belief that 'everything is an abstraction of reality'[114] and Grierson's privileging of pattern, shape and form. What the viewer sees is real but that reality is as Hitchcock describes, significantly 'heightened' by the photography and especially music such that it also creates a kind of fantasy that ignores the social, political, even human elements in its attempt to get to the 'interpretation that is profound'.[115]

The human aspect does subsequently begin to emerge however and the dissonant opening is softened by overlaid upper class English female voices launching the ships with the repeated refrains of 'I name this ship … and all who sail in her', and it gradually lessens musically too, allowing the emergence of a clear modality as triplet pentatonic horn figures mimic gentler ships' sirens from bar twenty-one. Annotated with 'ship seen', in a kind of hornpipe clarion call to the sea, the figures' modality is compromised by alternating passages of chromatic chord changes ('sterns launching') (Ex. 2), the hopeful pentatonic modality thus darkened, suggesting perhaps that voyages may not always be smooth. The emotive quality generated is a clear consequence of Hamilton's affinity for ships and the sea: '[they] mean a great deal to me … they affect me considerably'.[116] The stark abstracted industrial imagery of ships of this opening section is imbued with feeling by the music, feeling that comes from a real place in terms of Hamilton's engagement and so begins to convey meaning about the power, beauty and importance of shipbuilding (and not least to the Scottish economy) but at the expense of any recognition of the shipbuilders and their concerns as workers. According to Anderson, the score exhibits 'phoney rhetoric',[117] understandable if one considers the ongoing decline of shipbuilding on the Clyde and if the score is taken as a bolster to Clifford Hanley's commentary. Prone to 'personification and hyperbole,'[118] with lines such as 'flanging machines exert forces on a plate which are at once brutal and loving', it brings the film down to earth with its initial entry announcing 'Britain is

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[110] Duncan Petrie, *Screening Scotland* (London, 2000), 112.

[111] Schafer, *British Composers*, 160.

[112] Ibid. 155-6.

[113] This opening upshot of the stern of a large vessel entering the water backwards, viewed from an almost inhuman closeness, just behind the huge propeller, is one of the great opening shots of any film and took considerable endeavor and mishap to capture it (Harris, interview, New York, 2-3). The rest of the sequence took a year of filming ship launches and involved 'most of the cameramen in Scotland' (Forsyth Hardy, *Scotland in Film* (Edinburgh, 1990), 130).

[114] Harris, interview, 1. The editing is based as much on correspondences between shapes and angles as it is on conventional narrative and even more so in the *I Remember* edit that lacks the contextualizing commentary.

[115] Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 109.

[116] Schafer, *British Composers*, 160.

[117] Anderson, *Arts Review* transcript.

[118] Neil Blain, 'A Scotland as Good as Any Other? Documentary Film 1937-82', in Eddie Dick (ed.), *From Limelight to Satellite: A Scottish Film Book* (Edinburgh, 1990), 65.

an island nation—an island of islanders and shipbuilders'. For *I Remember*, Grierson cuts the sequence before the commentary starts, circumventing if not entirely obviating these issues.

The opening three minutes of the *I Remember* sequence of *Seawards* is re-edited to be structured around the seamless flow of Hamilton's music, such that after the dissonant start and before the commentary of the original begins, the image sequence of ships and shipyards, with some shots taken from the air and others showing a luxury liner off New York City, is different to the original film. In the original, all of the latter clips occur later and are overlaid with commentary and have either very different music (the latter part of Hamilton's Sequence I—loud, dramatic) or no music at all. Yet it all seems of a piece in *I Remember* due to the binding nature of the continuous score and craft of the re-edits. It demonstrates the contingent nature of the audio-visual relationship employed in juxtapositions that emphasize the abstraction of shape and movement over cognitive understanding and specifically, the 'abstract poetry' inherent in depictions of industrial processes and structures.

In general, the clips chosen from *Seawards* for *I Remember* focus on the more dramatic shots of ships, the shipyard and its surroundings, and especially on the physical and noisy activities of the workers. Though as discussed, Grierson does not talk specifically about music in his treatment, like his writing generally, he is quite effusive about non-musical sound. He identifies ten sequences in all, the fifth of which was to include the 'orchestration of noise … in four or more motives', including 'the clanging of hammers, the clatter of machinery and sound of sheet metal … The sequence should be cut formally to the passage of the noise'. A repetition of the sequence should feature 'the noisiest of all the bastards – the pneumatic drills of the caulkers' and that ultimately 'this is a crude but heroic symphony of shipbuilders at work with their tools roaring'.[119] Hamilton's Sequence I is cut off rather abruptly at bar sixty-seven in the score and the rest of Sequence I is omitted from *I Remember*, making way instead for the wail of a haunting siren that heralds this two-minute section of 'noise and movement'.[120] It features the sounds and images of drilling, welding and the movement of materials. According to Riddell Black, production director of Templar Films, in order 'to record with authenticity the intense sounds … of a shipyard … our recording engineers carried out many experiments which resulted … in "constructing" numerous unusual sounds to achieve the correct reproduction characteristic, but with heightened effect'.[121] The noises are quite harsh and loud (made more so by relatively poor audio quality), the editing generally quick with everything seen from unusually low and arresting angles. Movement abounds and there are some remarkable tracking shots, one through a vertical distance of 200 feet up the side of the featured tanker, British Queen.[122] Close-up cameos of the workers, viewed from below, lionize their 'heroic', masculine endeavour. The whole effect is strongly reminiscent of early Russian documentary, especially some of the industrial sections of Dziga Vertov's first sound film, *Enthusiasm* (1930), about the fulfilling of a Soviet five-year plan, a film Grierson was deeply influenced by, especially in terms of its use of noise.[123] The choice of Harris, an American and an avowedly visual filmmaker as director[124] (Pl. VI) is crucial here and was a typically bold move by Grierson who recommended him.[125] McArthur describes

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[119] Grierson, 'Shipbuilding: Outline Treatment', 4-5.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Robert Riddell Black, 'Shooting the Great Ships', *Film User*, 16 (188, 1962), 266-7 at 267 (NLS 11/1/171. References to 'location sound' in this article are in a sense problematic because the exact detail of its make-up cannot be known—some sounds may have been recorded on location, others may be library sounds and others still may be recording studio fabrications.

[122] Ibid.

[123] John Grierson, 'Russia's Latest', *The Clarion* (Dec. 1931), 349.

[124] Harris was later an additional cinematographer for Godfrey Reggio's highly visual cinematic poem, *Koyaanisqatsi* (1982).

[125] Grierson had been impressed by Harris's experimental film *Highway*, an abstract study in the movement and shapes of New York City's highways and Bronze medalist at the Brussels International

such scenes as 'reminiscent of stakhanovite art of the Soviet Union'[126] (Pl. V), its promotional, even propaganda motivation clear.

The section of noise and movement slowly diminishes as the cranes and pulleys come to a halt. The melancholy syncopated solo muted trumpet melody of the beginning of Sequence II calls out (crotchet = 42, 'Suspensions of equipment'), soon accompanied by two oscillating calm and gentle but tonally ambiguous horn and trombone chords, a third apart.[127] At the same time the camera movement slows, alighting eventually on a worker high up on the British Queen, lighting a cigarette from the end of his welding torch then following his gaze and catching a seagull's flight; the beauty of the surrounding Scottish hills eventually coming into view. The muted trumpet melody almost seems to embody some unknown thoughts of the welder, melancholic and wistful but grounded by the soft accompanying chords, longing for the end of the working day perhaps, the view to the hills an escape both physically and metaphorically. It is an heroic sound and visual image, as Grierson wanted. To end the *I Remember* sequence, more gentle, bustling sounds of the shipyard then fade back up as the camera switches to a wider view of the ship's hull and the brass gently repeats what must now be taken as the tonic F major (Ex. 3).

A sense of catharsis is engendered by the flow of dramatic, declarative music, clattering concrete sound and concluding plaintive, lyrical music: the *I Remember* edit of *Seawards is* a 'magical' sequence. It combines and juxtaposes elements leading to several transcendences at a local level as well as feeding the 'imaginative life of the people' in order to 'express general truths, which exist at the level of abstraction, beyond the empirical':[128] the 'purity' of the dissonant modernist opening music and looming ships' hulls is tempered emotionally by the disembodied female voices, their received English tones suggesting a class-based appeal to sophistication, and by the partial transformation of dissonance into modality. The impassively mechanistic noise sequence is humanized by idealized shots of the workers (that however ignores their true social situation), and then, as the music returns, is transformed into the humane, more geographically located lyricism of the close. This poetic, bittersweet lyricism is embodied in the music but also in the imagery of the beauty of the Scottish landscape set against the shipyard's 'glade of cranes' industrial harshness. It is a pattern of juxtapositions, transformations and loaded meanings that eschew contradiction and critique for an apparent higher purpose that is repeated and varied in the rest of Grierson's edits for *I Remember*. Despite the appeal to modernity and progress, Blain suggests *Seawards* ultimately emphasizes 'tradition, timelessness and destiny' and 'renders invisible the actual social and historical circumstances of shipbuilding', [129] a tendency that is virtually complete in the *I Remember* version.

Ex. 1. The opening 'serial' crescendo of *Seawards*, Sequence I (Hamilton, 1960).
Ex. 2. Pentatonic horn and trumpet triplet figures in *Seawards,* Sequence I.
Pl. V. 'Stakhanovite' shipbuilders from *Seawards*. © National Library of Scotland.
Pl. VI. Hilary Harris filming at Clyde shipyards c.1959. © National Library of Scotland.
Ex. 3. *Seawards* Sequence II that ends the *I Remember* sequence.

Experimental Film Festival in 1958. It uses a jazzy rock and roll soundtrack. He met Grierson at the Paddington Hotel and 'nearly fell through the floor when he said he wanted me to direct a documentary for the British Government and Clyde Shipbuilders Association' (Harris, interview, 1). Eddie McConnell has also spoken of the revelatory experience of attending the 1958 Brussels festival especially in discovering novel music and image combinations (McConnell, personal interview).

[126] McArthur, 'Scotland and Cinema', 63.

[127] F major is clouded by a low D and G, and A dominant seventh is augmented with B and F#.

[128] Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 109.

[129] Blain, 'A Scotland as Good as Any Other?, 65.

The Heart of Scotland

Heart of Scotland was also very much a Grierson vehicle as his extensive treatment shows[130] and given that *I Remember* was made as a tribute to him it makes sense that clips from this film about his home county (and country) which 'he had deep attachment to'[131] are featured most prominently and have undergone the most transformation by his re-editing. It is the most lyrical and evocative of the examples discussed and includes scenes of the Scottish natural landscape, as well as industry. One senses Grierson's genuinely heartfelt contribution. The extracts from *Heart of Scotland* are presented as three separate sequences in *I Remember*, totaling ten minutes of material and are made up of edits, sequenced as in the original (though with elisions), except the short opening edit which is taken from the middle of the original film. The extracts frame the opening and ending of both compilation films.

Apart from the opening short clip, all the clips that make up the extracts originally featured commentary by Welsh poet John Ormond. It is based on Grierson's detailed five 'movement' treatment for the film that abounds with facts, figures and allusions to elucidate 'six major themes'[132] that 'advertise the claims of Stirlingshire in several ways' and to highlight any 'brilliancies [that] shone on [the county]'.[133] In its attempt to highlight continuities between the deep Scottish past and present, it rarely ceases and all-but obscures the evocative 'magic' of music and image. As Bain suggests 'the conversion of known social values and historical facts … to some timeless and transcendent dimension seems especially laboured.[134] Brenda Davis' review of the film at Cork Film Festival praises *Heart of Scotland's* technical accomplishments and 'striking, if somewhat obtrusive score' but concludes the results are 'flat and mechanical'. She deplores the lack of human presence in the film concluding that 'in this arid conception of the heart of Scotland the heart of man has found no place'.[135] The expectation set up by the information rich commentary is therefore not fulfilled by what one sees, or indeed feels. Though Hardy pointed out at the time that visually, if not sonically, people *were* often featured (it being still quite practically difficult at this time to record live location interviews),[136] it is noticeable that for his *I Remember* edits of *Heart of Scotland* Grierson focused on material that features hardly *any* human presence, emphasizing the abstract nature of shape and form in both industrial and rural landscapes. Again, he attempts to circumvent Davis' (and potentially McArthur's and Bain's) criticisms by removing the commentary, such that the detail of the human story and specific Scottish historical figures discussed and the relationship of both to the contemporary, is either absent or sublimated. In doing so, we are reminded of Weisenborn's advice to the young Grierson in the 1920s, something he was still mindful of in 1962, to focus not on the 'worthiness of … citizens' but to look at the visual dynamics and abstract shapes.

However, even in the reductive abstraction of *I Remember*, a sense of place *is* still present in the *Heart of Scotland* sequences and more so than in the other two films discussed. This lends it a more specifically Scottish nationalistic resonance especially present in the opening and closing sequences of iconic Highland landscapes and identifiable landmarks such as Stirling Castle and the William Wallace monument, and implied Scottish 'themes' in Spedding's score. The first sequence opens with neutral scenes of swans flying over a lake with the sound of bird-wings flapping in flight that then makes way for Spedding's music as the more recognizable agricultural landscape of the Carse of Stirling comes into view. The music, scored for strings, brass, woodwind and piano is lyrical yet lively,

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[130] John Grierson, 'Stirlingshire: Revised Outline Treatment' (20 Jun. 1960), 1-7 (NLS 4/11/465).
[131] Hardy, *John Grierson*, 194.
[132] Grierson, 'Stirlingshire', 1.
[133] John Grierson, 'Film of Stirlingshire' (13 May 1960), 1-2 at 1 (NLS 4/11/465).
[134] Bain 'A Scotland as Good as Any Other?', 67.
[135] Davis, 'Cork Film Festival', 62.
[136] Donald, 'Business Lunch', 43.

tonal yet full of chromatic twists and turns exemplifying Frederick Rimmer's characterization of Spedding's music as featuring 'extravert exuberance … and flashes of brilliance' that 'exploit a colourful tonal idiom'.[137] Though unidentified, allusions to Scottish music are apparent in the plaintive melodies and use of slow dance-like rhythmic passages involving open parallel fifths. The music gets more lively and strident as Stirling Castle comes into view and ends with a brass fanfare, echoing its military and regal history. But the music stops suddenly and is followed, surprisingly, by a sudden lonely cry of a curlew and the tolling of bells as we look through the canon portholes of the castle to the impressive hilly landscape and Wallace monument. The allusive power of Soviet-style montage is employed in the change from diegetic sound to music and then from music to curlew and bells (mixed with orchestral tubular bells). It is highly emotive, the audio-visual material conjuring a sense of Scottishness and the lonely sound of the curlew and ominous tolling bells striking a melancholy note pointing up deep historical resonances of heroism but also of violence and death.[138] In the absence of any commentary, Davis' characterization of Spedding's score as 'striking but somewhat obtrusive' no longer applies as there is no commentary on which to obtrude. Instead, the music carries much of the meaning. The historical 'information' is conveyed by generating feeling in the audience and thus leading to a more intuitive 'knowing'.[139] This is partly achieved by the 'objects' and 'places' depicted becoming imbued with emotion by the music which inspires on a deeper level. Again, what really matters to Grierson is the 'interpretation which is [apparently] profound':[140] this landscape has seen conflict and endeavour for many centuries. Despite playing into a romantic Scottish myth, the clichéd introduction by Grierson of Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave*, replacing Spedding's more functional music (and more commentary) of the original film as dramatic images of the Highlands ensue, actually enhances the spell cast.

By contrast, the second *Heart of Scotland* sequence features purely industrial footage taken at Grangemouth oil refinery on the Firth of Forth that focuses on the metal structures of pipes, tanks, gantries and cooling towers. Both compilation films highlight the alien nature of the refinery world and through the removal of the explanatory commentary, the mysteriousness of the objects seen. This is deepened by the absence of any human presence, except in two long shots of distant figures that actually enhance this sense as they are so dwarfed by the industrial architecture. In general Spedding's music is quite dissonant and modernist in idiom in this sequence; one can sense again an echo of Weisenborn's influence on Grierson and that the use of abstraction *creatively* 'may be in fact the most naturalistic and realistic description of what we see … as we move about in the metropolitan world'.[141] As Hitchcock suggests via Gerson's script, it marks out lines of 'abstract sophistication',[142] the 'coolness' and apparently dry quality of modernist music employed to not just to highlight this, but to suggest it, whilst at the same time still 'condensing' emotion on the inanimate objects seen. The minor differences between *I Remember* and *Hitchcock on Grierson* matter here since in the *I Remember* script Grierson mentions Grangemouth in a lengthy introduction to the sequence, and the opening establishing long shot shows the refinery flanked by the Stirlingshire hills (Pl. VII). In *Hitchcock on Grierson* the sequence is presaged with the now familiar: 'like an abstract painting drawn from a heightened realism.

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[137] Rimmer, 'The Twentieth Century Renaissance', 82.

[138] William Wallace is a legendary Scottish heroic figure of almost mythic proportions. He notably defeated an English army at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in September 1297 and became one of the main leaders during the Wars of Scottish Independence.

[139] Corner, 'Sounds Real: Music and Documentary', 366.

[140] Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 109.

[141] Grierson, 'Art and Revolution', 5-6.

[142] Gerson, 'John Grierson film (title t.b.a.): Mr. Hitchcock's commentary', 6.

Shape, form, colour, moulded into pattern and design'.[143] The *I Remember* establishing shot is also removed so the notion of a 'heightened realism' is pushed to the point where the heightening almost begins to obscure the actuality, let alone the geographical context of what one is seeing, through the close-up and low angle photography, with the music again enhancing and even engendering the effect.[144]

The music in this sequence emphasizes rhythm and timbre as much as melody and harmony. At the start, a series of trilling flutes, homophonic harp chords, ominous timpani, screeching piccolos, an angular and melodramatic piano arpeggio and almost cartoon-like xylophone figures are thinly scored over wide angle shots of garishly coloured huge pipes and oil tanks. The rhythms combine simple downbeat gestures and more erratic, sometimes quite rapid syncopated material that pick out key image edits but are fragmented by following the varying rapidity and stasis of the camera movement. The harmonic language is strongly dissonant and the dynamic level volatile but mostly quite loud and urgent. The whole effect is of a dramatic and slightly unnerving prelude and sure enough leads to a release of tension as the rhythms quicken and settle, and the harmony softens with the entrance of the strings and brass. The camera pans rapidly back and forth between tanks whilst the cellos loudly sound out a kind of warped Scottish reel, a *musical* hint at the locality within the visual abstraction, and the unison brass declaim a simple diatonic melody. The effect is witty and despite the lack of people in any of the shots, softens and humanizes the sequences with its folk-like music, even 'folksy' Scottish elements: the industrial imagery is somehow 'domesticated' and given a patriotic flavour. There is a reconciling here, and generally in the *Heart of Scotland* sequences, of the modernist, the folk-like, nostalgia for a Scottish past, and the humane. Typically though, the music quickly moves on to a more harmonically eerie section that echoes the opening, punctuated surreally by occasional dissonant harpsichord gestures as if to suggest a baroque musical link to the 'baroque' architecture of the refinery. The camera is now mostly static, the movement inherent in the image editing of tall alien structures towering over us as we gaze up in slightly bewildered awe, emphasized by the odd musical scoring and its ethereal dissonance (Pl. VIII).

This constant shifting of musical feel is a hallmark not just of the visual material that is its inspiration but of Spedding's style generally. His musical eclecticism and capacity to blend seemingly disparate musics convincingly, works in sequential terms but also 'vertically' with his fondness for simultaneous layering of styles and harmonies, and use of quotation. At its best, his film music convinces in a way that transcends the imagery though as Rimmer has commented, his style 'shows a reluctance to probe his own nature very deeply',[145] lending a certain cool distance from deeper emotional engagement (and unlike Hamilton in this respect). Spedding's former pupil and colleague, composer Rory Boyle suggests he sees no difference between Spedding's concert and his film music which 'is not another facet, it is exactly the same man; there is no compromise – it is still as challenging and gritty and interesting'. [146] At times the instrumentation refers directly to the content of the images such as in a later passage where the use of complex, forceful (metal) brass lines and rhythms

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[143] Ibid.

[144] STV may have had a more international audience in mind with *Hitchcock on Grierson*, the Scottish connections therefore being seen as less important, also evidenced by the lack of any mention of Films of Scotland.

[145] Rimmer, *A History of Scottish Music*, 82. It is interesting to note that friends of Spedding talk of his very private nature and that despite knowing him for many years, they never felt they ever *really* knew him (Inglis, 'Frank Spedding'; Rory Boyle, personal interview). What we get with his music is that 'public' rather than private persona. Pupil and later colleague of Spedding at RCS, Rory Boyle ultimately characterizes his music as having 'wonderful vitality and tremendous wit and engaging in a sort of dry way that can communicate immediately'.

[146] Boyle, personal interview.

mirror a maze of gleaming metal pipes viewed from below. In a more general sense of representation however, the strident, slightly hysterical brass material suggests an awed confusion at the myriad shapes and complexity of the pipework—'mystery' as a meeting point for the disorienting complexity of musical modernism and the oil refinery. This is matched by the unusual camera angles catching the blinding sunlight, vivid colours and labyrinthine shapes; it raises the question of what it is all for. This question is answered by the commentary in the original film but in *I Remember* one is left only to *wonder*. The removal of the commentary by Grierson and thus the laying bare of the wit, imagination and coolness of Spedding's music allows the profound emotional engagement that can really inspire and potentially reveal underlying realities of the phenomenal realm—it is the very opposite of Bain's 'laboured' and Davis' 'flat and mechanical' commentary-led original. In this case, the power, complexity and even beauty of an oil refinery are suggested, and in *I Remember* at least, this is allied to a Scotland on the Move narrative as a means of national promotion.

This taken a step further in the final and most abstract section of the sequence that places the refinery in an almost futuristic setting, perhaps belonging more 'to the realms of science fiction rather than informative documentary' and certainly signifying 'future possibility [rather] than a glorious past':[147] 'incomprehensible', angular and structures, space-age-like domes and huge snail-like aluminium pipework loom into view and are accompanied by ethereal sounds of gongs or a low vibraphone, harp harmonics, hollow sustained string chords, cymbals and wooden percussive sounds (Pl. IX). The music shimmers and rings. The rhythms are almost plodding, the harmony dissonant and approaching atonality, yet as the sequence draws to a close and some lone workers looking very small at the foot of a cooling tower come into view, the music brightens and resolves almost imperceptibly into a calming F dorian-tinged modality. A simple midrange lyrical flute melody, with the air of a quotation, descending gently, closes the sequence and one senses the desire again to re-emphasize the human, the simple folk-like elements suggesting a kind of honesty of the Scottish people. This may be an alien, industrialized workplace but it must still be understood in terms of continuity with the past and as a vital resource of contemporary Scotland.

The music in this second *Heart of Scotland* sequence highlights the glistening modernity and slightly frightening world of the industrial setting and is reminiscent of Sandbrook's idea of the democratic consensus era's 'worshiping' of technology. It helps fulfill Grierson's belief in magical documentary representation as a 'medium of national inspiration'. In doing so it places emphasis on 'beauty' at the potential expense of reality—*Heart of Scotland*, like *Seawards*, is in part, a 'modernist celebration of industrial beauty and awe' but one that tends to detach itself from that film's notions of tradition and timelessness; the oil refinery is depicted in its *I Remember* incarnation and especially in *Hitchcock on Grierson*, as unsettling and strange. However, as at the end of the *Seawards* example, a sense of resolution is also present, emphasizing the human element that underlies. This is true musically, in terms of cadences and general musical tenor, but also in the way it reconciles the 'ugliness' and confusion of an industrial site and its processes with its profound usefulness and societal importance. It thus aids society's 'humane and effective functioning by illuminating the interconnections on which it is built'. It does this by aestheticizing those processes and making them beautiful, even at the risk of contextualized truthfulness. The music humanizes the industrial landscape despite the lack of actual human presence. Visually everything gleams, is exciting, sublime even and also somewhat mysterious. The music

[147] Petrie, *Screening Scotland*, 112.

mirrors this, emphasizing again Russell's idea of the filmmaker's desire to recapture an imagined child's awe at the 'vivid sights and sounds [that] envelop and overwhelm'.[148]

The concluding elegiac sequence from *Heart of Scotland* mirrors the first with its musical content of folk-like implied Scottish themes, simple diatonic melodies, slightly clichéd 'archaic' open fifths and 'regal', 'military' trumpets now muted to suggest a more distant past. This is set against images of the distant oil refinery at dusk, the highland hills, rural farmland, fields of wheat, old farm machinery and finally Stirling Castle once again. The music is tonal and calm but any sentimentality is lessened by subtle but continuous use of strange dissonances[149] and by smoothly achieved but convoluted modulations.[150] The overall effect is melancholy and tinged with nostalgia—the complex but tenuous and vague allusions to the past suggested are mirrored by these sinewy and slightly tortuous harmonic shifts. It is in this final section that the uncritical 'continuity the film seeks between the past and present' reaches its apotheosis and is 'essentially a mystical one of strength passing from the land to the people and to modern, industrial processes'.[151] Without any 'telling' or poetic allusions by a commentator, the audience is required to think for themselves, though like Bain, if they are not drawn into the *myth*, they may conclude that this mystical continuity between the 'medieval past and technological present' is tenuous at best.[152] The music plays a major role in this process and potential elision, binding the industrial and rural by the sharing of visual material but also by continuity and seamless transformation of musical themes from the dissonance of industrial alienation to more consonant earth-bound familiarity. It is, however, arguably *willing* the continuity into being rather than revealing it. Tellingly, Grierson chose to end *I Remember* with this sequence, his poetic, magical vision keen to point up historical resonances amidst the industrial present. He wanted the audience to make those connections in a Scottish setting as a means of national, even nationalistic inspiration.

Pl. VII. *Heart of Scotland* production photo of Grangemouth oil refinery. © National Library of Scotland.
Pl. VIII. 'Mysterious' pipework at Grangemouth oil refinery. © National Library of Scotland
Pl. IX. 'Futuristic' domes at Grangemouth. © National Library of Scotland

The Big Mill

Though the shortest under discussion at just four minutes, the continuous single *Big Mill* sequence of *I Remember* is one of the most powerful and reiterates many of the themes so far discussed especially in terms of the reductive atmosphere of abstract representation but also of criticisms of the original film's commentary.[153] I will focus on two sections that

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[148] Russell, 'The Shadow of Progress', 35. It is noteworthy that *Heart of Scotland* was Henson's first professional film as director and Spedding's first film score. I certain exuberant naivety is apparent, perhaps not so far at all from Russell's childlike awe—the filmmakers' were not just depicting this but feeling it too (Laurence Henson, 'Frank Spedding', *The Herald* (16 Nov. 2001), 22). Spedding went on to compose numerous scores for the Committee.

[149] Often carried by a strangely detached flute duo that floats seemingly free of the harmonic plan.

[150] D major to Eb, to F, back to D and eventually finishing on a surprising but satisfyingly conclusive Db major.

[151] McArthur, 'Scotland and Cinema', 62.

[152] Bain, 'A Scotland as Good as Any Other?', 60, 67.

[153] Though they praised the film highly, David Baxandall, David Daiches and even Forsyth Hardy all expressed irritation at the 'fatuous' sentimentality of the opening and ending of the film that features a 'horribly cute little boy' ((David Baxandale, *Arts Review* transcript, discussion following David Daiches' review (broadcast 9.15-9.45 p.m. Scottish Home Service, May 17 1963), 1-2 at 1 (NLS 4/11/645), Forsyth Hardy, letter to Ralph Hillis, 20 Aug. 1962 (NLS 4/11/424)). Neither section appears in *I Remember*. Baxandall is also relieved when Alastair Borthwick's 'dreadful sort of mock simple, bogus

highlight specific details of the relationship of the score to the images in terms of Grierson's privileging of abstract representation, and a new musical element introduced by Spedding not present elsewhere in *I Remember*: music inspired by the harmonies and rhythms of jazz.

The sequence mostly inhabits the mill interior showing the rolling of hot steel into huge lengths and some of the products that it makes. It is lit very creatively using up to a dozen 10, 000 Kelvin lamps,[154] highlighting the 'beauty', symmetry and surreal aspects of the production line and factory floor. The film is scored for flute (doubling piccolo), clarinet, clarinet doubling alto saxophone, bassoon, trombone, trumpet, piano doubling celeste, percussion (tam-tam, cymbals, timpani, bass drum, xylophone, glockenspiel, Korean temple blocks), guitar, violins, viola and cello.[155] Publicity material describes it as being performed by a section of the Sinfonia Orchestra so presumably with a relatively small string section.[156] In several separate sections, over four minutes of the original twenty-three-minute film feature image and music alone; the *I Remember* sequence elides four of these sections, used in their original order. The sequence begins with a passage of vociferous, brass-dominated music over general factory shots (from about bar 28 of cue 1.M.2 in the score); the loud roar of the rolling machines (Pl. X) then takes over as we see a strip of hot steel move along a conveyer from a side view. The sound quality of the diegetic sound is noticeably superior in *The Big Mill* compared to the other films and its volume and power is considerable. A repeated bass drum hit increases in speed as the camera pans along and suddenly we are above the strip of glowing steel moving quickly along as a very rapid and chromatic, muted violin line weaves its sinewy way upwards, logical in its sequential patterns but dizzying in its harmonic twists (3.M.1) (Ex. 4): like the mimicking of the ship's hull in *Seawards* by Hamilton, the shape and rapid flow of the musical line can be directly related to the physical movement and form of the molten steel strip on the conveyer. The music replaces the diegetic sound completely and we follow the course of the hot steel from almost inhuman viewpoints, its red luminosity unreal in the lights. The 3.M.1 section description of *molto brillante* seems at odds with the *senza espressivo*, *piano* and *con sordino* instructions to the string players yet the quietly energized effect, full of sublimated force is mesmerizing and appropriate, mirroring the underlying power, yet graceful quality of the machines and red-hot steel. This surreality is highlighted further by the entry of an ethereal but strident string melody using harmonics, played suddenly *fortissimo* and importantly *portamento*, the queasy slides emphasizing the scene's otherworldly qualities (Ex. 4, bars 15-23). Short urgent woodwind figures (bars 28-35) build to a brief image of the face of a worker (the only visual human presence in the whole sequence) and a large wheel being released with loud factory sounds suddenly interjecting. Again we have the juxtaposition of the abstract surreality of the industrial, highlighted by modernist musical expression, tempered by 'windows' of harmonic familiarity.

A repeat of the *prestissimo* chromatic string line later ensues (3.M.2), offset by a stately celeste and guitar melody echoing the string harmonics of before, as we see further materials moving along conveyers; the more literal representation of form and movement is thus tempered by more allusive musical material perhaps suggesting other more random

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biblical commentary' that opens the film falls away. There is a general sense from the critical reception of their films, that Films of Scotland did not always get their commentaries right, either in tone, language or proportion. Notwithstanding the way forward possibly shown by Grierson with *I Remember*, by 1974 Allen Wright was calling on the Committee for an 'embargo on commentaries' that even if for only one year 'would be the greatest blessing that could be bestowed on Scottish films' ('Wanted: an embargo on film wordiness', Unknown newspaper (26 Aug.) (FHA H.2.4).

[154] McConnell, personal interview.

[155] Frank Spedding, *The Big Mill* (c. 1962), Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Music and Manuscript Collections (uncatalogued, parts only).

[156] Films of Scotland, Publicity leaflet for *The Big Mill* (n.d.) (FHA H.2.10.10.).

industrial noises and gestures. A gradual reduction in texture and tempo leads to an edit in which five minutes of the original film are cut, instead moving to music cue 4.M.2, a modern jazz-infused waltz that runs for the whole of the rest of the *I Remember* sequence. At rehearsal mark 7 it features 'walking' bass pizzicato cellos, a syncopated alto saxophone melody (in dotted crotchets) and guitar, accompanying wider shots of almost balletic slowly moving machinery (Ex. 5). From bar 16, the introduction of clarinet, bassoon, glockenspiel, celeste, arco low strings (from bar 21) then flute with flutter tongue articulation (bar 27), cloud the mood of a long single take moving along the conveyer from above, the conveyer now' re-cast' with the change of mood. The music weaves and eddies harmonically, by turns plaintive, joyous and elusive but always fairly urgent and lively (Ex. 6). 'Argumentative' muted trumpet 'calls' in repeated staccato quavers are introduced over gleaming steel pipe ends (bar 59) suggesting military heavy metal, and then the music shifts to wistful violas and cellos (4.M.2, bars 67- 80) accompanying a shot of moving fridges hung from the ceiling and arranged in highly symmetrical patterns. Reference to Kurt Weil, one of Spedding's abiding influences, is obvious throughout this section with the quirky, oddly scored and slightly rhythmically awkward jazz-inspired music.[157] The dominance of the saxophone along with strong jazz-waltz influences in this section has two functions: it lends the overtly poetic photography of symmetrical steel appliances and machinery this balletic, 'dancing' quality, the slightly unusual triple time syncopations mirroring the shifting visual symmetrical juxtapositions. It also adds a 'cool', sophisticated (again) modern musical twist, that blends the musical harmonic language of post-war jazz with more modernist abstraction, imbuing the mill footage with a sense of a progressive, 'happening' industry and by association, Scotland too. The cue 4.M.2 then repeats over surreal shallow depth-of-field close-ups of cutlery and other more generic and less identifiable steel materials, the music as mysterious and dissonant as before, the sequence ending as the flutter tonguing flute drops to a low F at bar 33 (Ex. 6).

Grierson had no direct hand in the original version of *The Big Mill* apart from his general association with Henson and McConnell and his production-advisory role on the Films of Scotland Committee, yet in terms of his re-edits of the film and the focus of his script in *I Remember* on shape, pattern and abstraction, the combination of sound and image in this closing section is as close to the purity of this vision as any of the sequences discussed. Again, as in McArthur's Stakhanovite shipbuilders of *Seawards*, and the allegorical montage of *Heart of* Scotland, it has parallels with early 20th century Russian thinking, so influential on Grierson, this time in the constructivist concept of 'making strange' (*ostranenie*). Photographer's like Aleksandr Rodchenko wanted to make the habitual 'strange' by presenting it in a novel light, using 'extreme low-angle shots … that would transform ordinary objects into symbolic visual signs'.[158] The visual focus in this final sequence on form, colour and movement, close-ups and unusual perspectives, combines with the tonally ambiguous and chromatic music that shifts all the while in style, texture and mood, yet never loses its continuity and capacity to make sense of, bind and drive everything forward. The 'making strange' is also inherently present in the music—slightly awkward in its tenor, familiar but pushed to places one doesn't expect but always leading you there logically and coolly.

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[157] Spedding was a jazz improviser and wrote several jazz-inspired works, notably the score to Films of Scotland's *Weave Me a Rainbow* (McConnell, 1962). Within documentary generally, the strongly jazz-influenced soundtrack for Haanstra's Academy Award winning *Glas* (1958) may well have been an influence and in the pre-war period Len Lye's 1930s work for the GPO under Grierson's auspices often employs jazz scoring, such as his *A Colour Box* (1935) that uses 'trad' jazz. Similarly, Lou Lichtveld's score for Joris Ivens' *Philip's-Radio* (1931) has strong allusions to mainstream jazz of the time within a generally light classical idiom.

[158] Vlada Petric, *Constructivism in Film* (Cambridge, 1987), 11.

As Murray Grigor says, Spedding 'brought films alive'[159] and the overriding 'knowledge' *The Big Mill* sequence engenders as a result, is of both the power and importance of factories like a steel mill as well as of their aesthetic qualities. The combination of sound and image is symbolic of not just 'Scotland on the Move' but of the important function and relationship of society to industry in general.

Pl. X. *The Big Mill* production photo of steel rolling. © National Library of Scotland
Pl. XI. Frank Spedding, 1929-2001 © Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's Archives & Collections.
Ex. 4. *The Big Mill*, Violin I, cue 3.M.1 (Spedding c. 1962). © Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's Archives & Collections.
Ex. 5. Reconstruction of cue 4.M.2., bars 1-17, full score. Only the parts survive.
Ex. 6. Reconstruction of cue 4.M.2., bars 23-33.

IV Conclusions: An Enduring Magic

As Aitkin points out, Grierson's philosophical and political idealism that fuelled his consciousness raising, propaganda-driven approach to documentary filmmaking and production was an 'impractical utopian model' not fit to address an 'adverse political reality'.[160] So whilst his 1968 speech on film and political leadership that preceded the showing of *I Remember* at the Edinburgh Film Festival that exemplifies his approach does seem naïve, it must however be seen in the light of the times.[161] Grierson was talking at a time when the democratic consensus was starting to falter, the prosperity of the earlier 1960s fading and social unrest rising. He was encouraging filmmakers to maintain their 'unquestioned commitment to society as a whole' in the face of much more turbulent times and with industry itself faltering. By 1968 (the time of *I Remember*), television, arguably a branch of journalism rather than cinema, was becoming dominant with its critical and lively focus on social problems and injustices. It encouraged more subjective opinion and outré content and was unafraid to generate political controversy. This chimed with a youth culture's growing contempt for 'the establishment' and distrust of institutions. As Sandbrook comments it was 'popular culture' that 'really began to represent casualties of change'[162] and the considered, aesthetically-driven and uncritical approach of the prestige documentary filmmakers like Harris, Henson and McConnell was seen as out-of-touch and irrelevant. As I have shown, even at the time the films were made in the early 1960s, they were becoming outmoded. Their like was attacked from the late 1950s as clichéd, re-treading old ground, not paying attention to social issues, and that such 'prestige merchants' were fatally compromised by sponsorship.[163] By the 1980s and the demise of Films of Scotland, those earlier criticisms become solidified and expanded, the social problems and national uncertainty in Scotland ever more acute such that the 'fantasy worlds' of Scottish life conjured by Films of Scotland are seen by some as irritating and symptomatic of Scotland's reluctance to address its very real problems. Grierson's consciousness raising exercises and

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[159] Grigor, personal interview.
[160] Aitken, *Film and Reform*, 194.
[161] Arguably though some of what Grierson says in this speech does have contemporary pertinence. The idea of the populace becoming disillusioned with and ultimately contemptuous of the intelligentsia's insistence that the contradictions of society are virtually an end in themselves or at best just have to be lived with (read the hegemony of the 'Liberal elite' today), resonates strongly when set against recent political events like the rise of 'populism', the election of Donald Trump, the political dominance of nationalism in Scotland and the United Kingdom voting to leave the European Union. Grierson's ultimate example of the result of 'faith lost in a welter of words in a time of crisis' is Hitler.
[162] Sandbrook, '*Today in Britain* – reflections on a brave new world', 49
[163] Russell and Taylor, 'The Long Tail', 8.

desire to inspire 'dreams and beliefs' and life-giving hope in the search for 'national persuasion' seemed like empty propaganda at best and falsifying and thus holding back progress at worst.

Nevertheless, although the edits Grierson did for *I Remember* abdicate from any sense of responsibility on an immediately human level in an attempt to sidestep the political and social concerns raised by critics of the original films, I would argue that in doing so, what remains today (some 25 years after Blain's criticisms) *is* their 'magical' and more universally inspirational appeal. The clips have the capacity to make one *feel* good. This is in no small part due to the power of the music revealed by Grierson in the re-editing process and its ability to evocatively combine with the images, free of semantic instruction or hyperbole. The ability of the *I* Remember re-edits to challenge well-worn dichotomies between modernism and commerce, realism and abstraction deserves attention.[164] Beyond the sensual pleasure of the music and visual play, what that inspiration actually consists of is more elusive though the appreciation of the endeavour, importance and 'beauty' of the industrial processes depicted is significantly enhanced. Similarly, the juxtaposition of the rural and industrial in *Heart of Scotland* and the mystical representation of the continuity of old and new, of 'strength passing from the land to the people and to modern, industrial processes' is profoundly conveyed. In doing so it seems to transcend the critique of it as hyperbole or even a myth. This suggests the filmmakers' intent, the composers' music and Grierson's understanding of the 'imaginative life of the people' in moulding the originals further by his re-editing, was not trivial or misplaced. The popularity and interest in post-war industrial and other documentaries as suggested by the recent restoration and release of numerous BFI DVDs and accompanying literature suggests there is a sustained and growing appetite for material of this sort of material. This is in part due to the 'feel good' factor created by the audio-visual material and its ensuing appeal to the imagination, something that is in sharp contrast to the dominance of issue-based and / or the aesthetically impoverished didactics of contemporary documentary practice. It is also due to the generation of feelings of nostalgia.

Even at the time, *I Remember* was partly nostalgic, not only because it showed clips from pre-war films but because of the style, form and content of the newer films discussed here that were based on them. On an aesthetic level, music like Frank Spedding's was becoming outdated not only in its un-dogmatic and relatively conservative British approach to 'aesthetic modernity' but also in its function and application in the prestige documentary. Russell and Taylor describe the post-war manifestations of Movement films' formalist audio-visual abstractions as more 'middlebrow and middle-aged … than their youthful 1930s incarnation'.[165] Their lack of proper context and critique and willingness to embrace contradiction was seen to come from a more deferential era and was at best irrelevant and at worst, irresponsible. Ironically it is these negative features perceived at the time that make the films appealing today: the musical idiom is refreshing, invigorating, its 'modernist' touches, ironically, nostalgic; they evoke feelings of wellbeing, they inspire and uplift; they eschew negativity, opening the door to escapist, even fantasy-driven aesthetic pleasure. In doing so they generate *affect* and appeal above all to the 'imaginative life of the people', perhaps even tapping into an 'underlying transcendental reality', albeit one that is hard to express and with the suspicion that it is perhaps, a chimera. Though I have tried to elucidate some of the meanings operating in the combination of music and image both at a local and more universal level, how much the appeal of the films and especially Grierson's re-edits today is really to do with looking at steel making or an oil refinery is debatable. Concerns about declining employment, industrial practices, the effects on workers, health and safety and especially environmental impacts would be prominent in many people's minds today, and were then too. So the critiques discussed of the films have validity and we cannot view

[164] As does Films of Scotland output generally in this respect.
[165] Ibid. 6-7.

them today with naivety as we have become too knowing; we know that they were partial fantasies even at the time and that Grierson's 'utopian model' was indeed just that. Nevertheless, freed from their overtly didactic purpose by Grierson in *I Remember*, the 'excitement' of seeing the environments depicted made especially emotive by Spedding's and Hamilton's scores, the implied impressive human endeavour that built them and appreciation of their important function remains; for a brief time cynicism and critique are held at the door.

Part of the pleasure in these films *now* is also nostalgic. Watching the films engenders a sense of loss of the past, the pleasure coming from the 'healing' effected by giving the past a sense of immediacy. The pleasure is bittersweet though since nostalgic emotion juxtaposes intimacy *and* distance from the past, with the feeling of its restoration *and* loss,[166] especially pertinent in that shipbuilding on the Clyde is today a shadow of its former self and the site of the big mill is now a leisure park. This process plays itself out as we experience films like *I Remember* and *Hitchcock on Grierson* today, through their agency as a window on the specifics of the past depicted, on a way of filmmaking, photography, editing, programme-making and especially musical composition, and perhaps above all, on a way of thinking about and supporting a society that believed the future to be bright. As David Putnam has said, 'despite my own generation's failure to deliver on the admirable ambitions set out in [such] films … you (or at least I) can't help yearning for a return to the vision and belief that caused them to be made'.[167]

[166] Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (London, 1993), 23-4.

[167] David Putnam, 'A personal introduction', in *Shadows of Progress* DVD booklet (London, 2013), 0-1 at 1.